

After Rachel and Jesus, Maths is the love of my life.

Not that they're in competition:

as evidenced in this morning's Gospel, Jesus loves Maths too.

At the back of my boyhood Maths exercise books

there were all those marvellous tables of imperial units,

a furlong equalling 220 yards sort of stuff,

'Mum, I've just run half a furlong, half a furrow!'

A firkin equal to 72 pints, the capacity of every beer barrel.

When John tells us each water jar contained 2 or 3 firkins

- some approximation - you can see where the plot is heading.

Let's go for three firkins, that's  $3 \times 6 \times 72 = 1296$  pints,

around 1300 bottles of wine, so some party.

The Galilean Police would have thought Christmas

had come early as they booked folk wending their way home.

'Hallo, Hallo, Hallo, or Shalom, Shalom, Shalom,

been partying with Jesus during lockdown have we, sir?'

Just do the Maths with filling the jars,  
drawing water from the well with an 18 pint bucket.  
Each jar would take 72 divided by 18, four buckets,  
six jars therefore make  $6 \times 4$ , a total of 24 buckets  
@ five speedy minutes per bucket that's two hours.  
So not exactly a quick miracle; give miracles time.

And not just lots and lots of wine,  
but the very best wine, kept until last.

Moral of story? Later in John's Gospel Jesus says,  
'I am the true vine, you are the branches.'

This Eucharist we drink from that true vine,  
a drop rather than 1300 bottles, but the same party theme.

Every Eucharist should be about ecstasy rather than misery.

'Was it a good service, Love?'

'Yes, we drank 1300 bottles of wine!'

And the best wine – you're that best wine.

Someone had a go at me last week

about our church's age profile - I'm 66, get over it!

When I was 26 they moaned on because I wasn't 66...

You're the best wine, matured, bearing the fruits of the spirit,

Chateau '55, Chateau '45, Chateau '35, Chateau '65:

whatever, in Christ you're simply the best.

I've buried lots of saints,

read and even written the obituaries of lots of saints,

who make me feel so inferior,

bishops who've converted a diocese before breakfast.

At every funeral I take comfort from these naughty words:

'You're dead, I'm not.'

You're simply the best, the best wine, be the best wine

to cheer your family, your work, your church this week,

giving the Galilean Police Force a wide berth!